

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Elections/Restrictions

Claims 16-20 (Group II) are subject to a restriction requirement. A provisional election of claims 1-15 and 21-24 (Group I) was made during a telephonic interview between the Examiner and Applicants' representative, Mr. Brad Hulbert, on April 15, 2004. Applicants, by the foregoing amendments, have cancelled claims 16-20 without prejudice to the filing of a divisional application.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 4-15 as being dependent on a rejected base claim and indicated these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 4 previously depended from claim 1. All of the limitations of claim 1 have been amended into claim 4. Therefore, claim 4 is allowable. Claims 5-15 depend ultimately from allowable claim 4 and are, therefore, also allowable. Additionally, claims 4, 7 9 and 12 have been amended to address minor matters of form, such as punctuation. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw his objection to claims 4-15.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 21-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent 6,356,914 to de Carmo et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,377,518 to Auwens et al. Claims 1-3 and 21-24 have been canceled by the foregoing amendments without prejudice to the filing of a continuation application. Therefore, the rejection of claims 1-3 and 21-24 is moot and should be withdrawn.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that all of the claims pending in this patent application are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any remaining formal issues that a telephonic interview would be helpful to resolve, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at (360) 379-6514.

Respectfully Submitted,

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